



18th Battalion Association

Windsor and Detroit Branch

Do you remember the night we left London? There was a big crowd to see us off but we eventually got started. Our first stop was Montreal where we only remained long enough to change engines. For the next three days we travelled through some sparsely settled country. There was not much scenery as there was a lot of bush on both sides of the track. We all enjoyed eating in the Dining Car. It was the first time we had ever been in one.

About the third day out we were told to get cleaned up as we were going to get off at the next town and go for a march. We did at a place called Moncton, N.B. We marched up the main street, made a right hand turn and came back by a lesser main street. The people were friendly but not overly-excited as other Battalions had likely done the same. About two days later, we repeated and got off at a place called Truro. This must have been a mill town as there were a lot of young women around. While a short over weight Town Official stood by the Colonel reading a speech of welcome, most of the fellows were flirting with the young girls who were standing nearby. They were very friendly and after we had our little march, many of the natives were at the Station all waving goodbye as we pulled out.

On a very rainy Sunday morning, we arrived at dockside Halifax. It didn't take long to transfer from the train to the S.S. "Grampion" which was docked nearby. As soon as we were settled we had our first meal aboard. It was not too good. Just before dusk the Grampion sailed and we were on our way. There was not too much excitement crossing the ocean. We had some sea sickness, physical jerks, Crown & Anchor, etc., and about the sixth day out, we stopped and waited for the H.M.S. "Cumberland" to pull close. A young Naval Officer was rowed over to consult with our Captain. While all this was going on ~~our way~~, the Battleship, the first one we had ever seen, going in the opposite direction.

Our Band was on deck. Playing Rube Butevin and other selections. It didn't take too long and we were again on our way.

About two mornings later, we went on deck and found we were sailing up the Mersey. Two hours later, we landed at a place called Avonmouth. We soon moved from the Grampion to a waiting train and after a short delay we were again on the move. We travelled through some populous districts and about four hours later got off at a little place called Westenhanger. We marched from there to West Sandling camp, a distance of three miles, where our war training would really begin in earnest. We had left London on April 12, 1915, and arrived in Sandling on April 29th, 1915.

TEMPUS FUGIT: It was raining the night we left Sandling for Folkestone. When we got there we immediately boarded the Channel Steamers and were soon on our way. The Fourth Brigade General Staff had embarked the Channel Steamers and were with us. After a long eventful trip we were towed into Boulogne about mid-morning. We then marched up the steep hill to the tented assembling centre at the top. The cooks got busy as everyone was hungry. It had been a long long night. After supper we marched to the Boulogne station where we boarded a French train. After riding in the darkness for nearly seven hours, we detrained, the station sign reading St. Omer. The next day and for several days after that we were again on the move always edging closer to the front line. On the Thursday, we arrived at a small French village called Eeyck, and were told we would rest here for a few days. We did and while we were there we heard (through the grapevine) that someone had swiped the Colonel's horse while the Transport wasn't looking. It turned out to be true.

On the Saturday we were inspected by Major General Alderson who was said to be the Commander of the Canadian Corp. The following day our Chaplain Captain Carlisle held an open-air service which was well attended. He preached a wonderful sermon and we all sang the old favourites. The following Tuesday we were again on the march, and after a day or so we arrived in Dranoutre which was considered the gateway to the Western Front. After supper we started marching again and a few hours later the order "Single File" was given. We then